

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
25 March 2004 (25.03.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
WO 2004/025362 A1

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: G02F 1/225, 1/035

(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP2003/010093

(22) International Filing Date: 9 September 2003 (09.09.2003)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
02078774.3 13 September 2002 (13.09.2002) EP  
03075716.5 12 March 2003 (12.03.2003) EP

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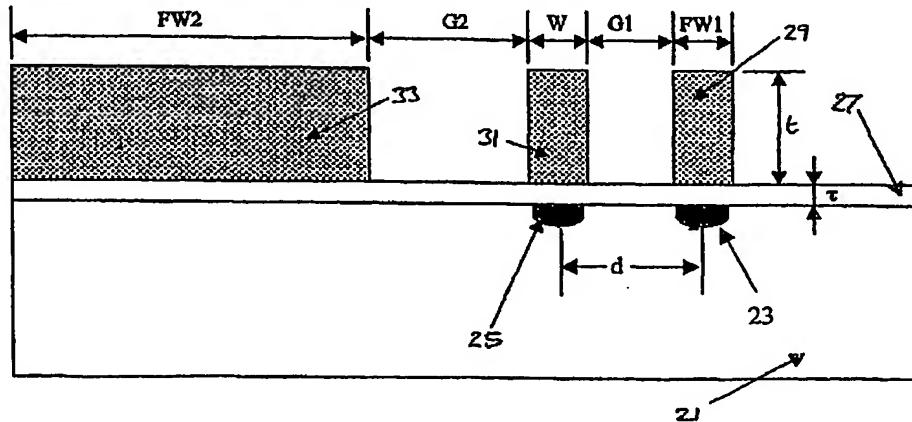
(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:  
— with international search report

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: LITHIUM NIOBATE OPTICAL MODULATOR



(57) Abstract: An optical modulator comprises a Z-cut lithium niobate substrate (21) on which is formed a Mach-Zehnder interferometer having two generally parallel waveguides (23, 25) lying beneath a buffer layer of dielectric material (27). First and second ground electrodes (29, 33) and a hot electrode (31) are disposed on the buffer layer (27), the first and second ground electrodes (29, 33) being spaced either side of the hot electrode (31), the hot electrode (31) and the first ground electrode (29) being proximate to at least apart of the respective waveguides (25, 23). The electrode structure is unsymmetrical in that (a) the hot electrode and the first ground electrode each have a width substantially less than that of the second ground electrode and/or (b) the spacing between the first ground and hot electrodes is different from the spacing between the second ground and hot electrodes, whereby a range of chirp values can be obtained. When the spacing (G1) between the first ground and hot electrodes (29, 31) is smaller than the spacing (G2) between the second ground and hot electrodes (33, 31), and preferably the hot and first ground electrodes have a width not exceeding 15µm, the modulator is capable of operation at frequencies above 10GHz, possibly up to around 40GHz.

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- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

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